●768

[For information on the desire of Blood parents to replace a deceased child by adoption, see Category 597, pp. 28-A, 28-B.]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

the seeker after power did not always, nor perhaps often, tell any one what he was going to do. 787 785

Three modes of burial were practised by the Blackfeet. They buried their dead on platforms placed in trees, on platforms in lodges, and on the ground in lodges. If a man dies in a lodge, it is never used again. The people would be afraid of the man's ghost. The lodge is often used to wrap the body in, or perhaps the man may be buried in it. 764 [768]

As soon as a person is dead, be it man, woman, or child, the body is immediately prepared for burial, by the nearest female relations. Until recently, the corpse was wrapped in a number of robes, then in a lodge covering, laced with rawhide ropes, and placed on a platform of lodge poles, arranged on the branches of some convenient tree. Some times the outer wrapping — the lodge covering — was omitted. If the deceased was a man, his weapons, and often his medicine, were buried with him. With women a few cooking utensils and implements for tanning robes were placed on the scaffolds. When a man was buried on a platform in a lodge, the platform was usually suspended from the lodge poles.

Sometimes, when a great chief or noted warrior died, his lodge would be moved some little distance from the camp, and set up in a patch of brush. It would be carefully pegged down all around, and stones piled on the edges to make it additionally firm. For still greater security, a rope fastened to the lodge poles, where they come together at the smoke hole, came down, and was securely tied to a peg in the ground in the centre of the lodge, where the fireplace would ordinarily be. Then the beds were made up all around the lodge, and on one of them was placed the corpse, lying as if asleep. The man's weapons, pipe, war clothing, and medicine were placed near him, and the door then closed. No one ever again entered such a lodge. Outside the lodge, a number of his horses, often twenty or more, were killed, so 766 768 [775]

766 that he might have plenty to ride on his journey to the
768 Sand Hills, and to use after arriving there. If a man had a
[775] favorite horse, he might order it to be killed at his grave, and his order was always carried out. In ancient times, it is said, dogs were killed at the grave.

765 Women mourn for deceased relations by cutting their hair
562 short. For the loss of a husband or son (but not a daughter), they not only cut their hair, but often take off one or more joints of their fingers, and always scarify the calves of their legs. Besides this, for a month or so, they daily repair to some place near camp, generally a hill or little rise of ground, and there cry and lament, calling the name of the deceased
[533] over and over again. This may be called a chant or song,
[152] for there is a certain tune to it. It is in a minor key and very doleful. Any one hearing it for the first time, even though wholly unacquainted with Indian customs, would at once know that it was a mourning song, or at least was the utterance of one in deep distress. There is no fixed period for the length of time one must mourn. Some keep up this daily lament for a few weeks only, and others much longer. I once came across an old wrinkled woman, who was crouched in the sage brush, crying and lamenting for some one, as if her heart would break. On inquiring if any one had lately died, I was told she was mourning for a son she had lost more than twenty years before.

Men mourn by cutting a little of their hair, going without leggings, and for the loss of a son, sometimes scarify their legs. This last, however, is never done for the loss of a wife, daughter, or any relative except a son.

551 Many Blackfeet change their names every season. When-
[553] ever a Blackfoot counts a new *coup*, he is entitled to a new name. A Blackfoot will never tell his name if he can avoid it. He believes that if he should speak his name, he would be unfortunate in all his undertakings.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

There was a women's society among the Blood and Northern Blackfoot tribes which was unknown among the Piegans. Its members were wives of the most highly respected men in their tribes. Prior to the sun dance in summer, members of this Matoki society built a ceremonial lodge which resembled a buffalo corral, and on the final day of their four-day ritual re-enacted the drive of buffalo into the corral. Some of the members wore buffalo headdresses and mimicked the actions of buffalo.[12]

The aged were no longer abandoned on the plains as had been the common lot of enfeebled old people before the Blackfeet acquired horses. If an old man or woman was too feeble to ride alone, he or she was carried on the A-shaped horse travois. If the head of a family knew he was about to die, he called his relatives together and told them how he wished his horses and other property divided among them. If he died without having made such a verbal will, the other people in camp made a run for his property as soon as they heard his relatives weeping and wailing. Men ran for his horses; women went for his household equipment. The men might take all his best horses and leave the poorest ones for his widow. Close relatives of the deceased, preoccupied with mourning his loss, made no attempt to prevent this raid on his property. Custom decreed that they should not do so. These raids were made with particular relish upon the property of a man of wealth who had had a reputation for miserliness during his lifetime.

No such action followed the death of a highly respected, generous leader. His lodge interior was carefully arranged just as it had been when he had entertained prominent guests. His body was dressed in his finest clothing and laid upon a raised platform of poles in the center of his lodge. Then his relatives painted simple representations of his brave war deeds on his favorite horse, braided its mane and tail and tied feathers in them, and placed his best saddle on the horse's back. In the presence of all the people of the camp this horse and others to be sacrificed were led to the door of the death lodge. Each in turn was shot

[12] *Ibid.*, 430-35.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850]

with a gun. A close relative of the dead man pressed the gun against the horse's head and pulled the trigger. The bodies of the dead horses were left where they fell, but camp members were permitted to strip them of their valuable riding gear. The gear was of no more value to the deceased, for according to Blackfoot belief the spirit horse joined the spirit of its master wearing the trappings it bore at the moment of its death. The death lodge was left undisturbed. People of the dead man's camp feared to loot it lest his spirit return to haunt them.

Prominent chiefs sometimes expressed the desire to have their bodies taken to the fur posts when they died. It was then the responsibility of the fur company to bury them. Maximilian witnessed a double burial of two relatives of Bear Chief by the traders at Fort McKenzie in the summer of 1833.

> The two Indians were laid in the same grave, wrapped in a red blanket and buffalo skin, over which was laid a piece of colored stuff, given by Mr. Mitchell [the chief trader]. The bottom and sides of the grave were lined with boards; the body, too was covered with wood; his bridle, whip, and some other trifles, were thrown in, and the grave filled with earth.[18]

A number of prominent Piegan chiefs who died in the fifties and sixties were taken to Fort Benton for burial.

Women prepared bodies for burial. The deceased were usually dressed in their best clothes, their faces were painted, and the bodies were sewn in buffalo robes and deposited in the forks of trees. Sometimes they were placed on the ground in a ravine or on the summit of a hill, then covered with rocks and dirt to keep the wolves from molesting them. It was customary to kill a man's favorite horse—his trusted companion on the buffalo hunt and war party—near his burial place. Poor families who could not afford to sacrifice the dead man's horse cut its mane and tail short and considered that the animal was in mourning for its master.

[18] *Travels*, II, 141.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

the spring of 1883 compelled Three Suns and his followers to abandon their homes and return to the vicinity of the agency for protection. By that time the number of Indian cabins had increased to two hundred. The agency carpenter was kept busy making doors, tables, and bedsteads for these new homes. Some of the Indians furnished their log cabins with clocks, stoves, and chairs and decorated the walls with pictures from illustrated papers. The greatest hindrance to permanent occupancy of these sturdy houses appeared to be the persistence of the Indian belief that a dwelling must be abandoned after a death occurred in it.[24]

Meanwhile, the Piegans continued to hunt buffalo where they could find them. In the winter of 1879–80, the Piegans journeyed south for a buffalo hunt in the Judith Basin. A number of the Canadian Blackfeet were there also, to escape the starvation that faced them in their barren land north of the border. White settlers, disturbed by the great influx of red men to land far south of their reservations, claimed that the Indians were killing cattle and called upon the army to compel the Indians to go back to their own lands. The Piegans were led home by a military escort. Chief White Calf protested vigorously that his people had not killed cattle, saying, "Why should we kill cattle when we had plenty of meat?" It was not until some time after his Indians had returned to their reservation that Agent Young learned directly from the North Piegan Chief Running Rabbit that his hungry young men had killed white men's cattle on land south of the Missouri. Young, however, believed the white cattlemen's claims that they had lost three thousand animals from Indian depredations were highly exaggerated.[25]

The following June a herd of five hundred cattle was received at the Blackfoot Agency. It was anticipated that this herd would increase sufficiently in five years to feed the tribe. Agent Young painstakingly explained to the chiefs the purpose of this first

[24] *Ibid.*, 1883, 96–97; Young to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 1, 1880, July 1, 1881, and July 31, 1881, Indian Office Records.
[25] *Ibid.*, January 6, 1882.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

primitive custom of providing the dead with objects thought to be useful to them in the afterlife.

Cropping the mane and tail of a dead man's horse or horses provided a method of honoring the dead without sacrificing valuable property. Probably it was much more common among Plains and Plateau tribes than the few, scattered references in the literature indicate. The wealthy Comanche and the Chiricahua Apache cut the manes and tails of those horses of the deceased man which had not been killed at the grave (Parker, 1855, p. 685; Opler, 1940, p. 474). Sarsi clipped the hair of horses that belonged to a warrior killed in battle (Jenness, 1938, p. 39). Flathead considered their mourning period for the dead ended when the clipped mane and tail of the dead man's horse grew out (Turney-High, 1937, p. 146). Other tribes reported to have cut the manes and tails of dead men's horses were the Plains Cree (Mandelbaum, 1940, p. 250), Assiniboin (Lowie, 1909, p. 42), Crow (Leonard, 1904, p. 271), Teton Dakota (Dorsey, 1894, p. 487), and Lemhi Shoshoni (Lowie, 1909, p. 215).

DISPOSAL OF HORSES AFTER THE DEATH OF OWNER

If the head of a Blackfoot family knew he was about to die he called his relatives together and told them how he wished his horses and other property divided among them, designating which items were to be received by each relative. If a man died without a verbal will procedures differed. His eldest son, or other close relative might take charge of the distribution of the property. However, a distant relative, angered at being left out of consideration, might help himself to a horse without its being reclaimed by the one to whom it was allotted.

I asked particularly about the distribution of the great herd of Many Horses, wealthiest of Blackfoot horse owners, after he and his favorite wife were murdered by the Gros Ventres in the summer of 1866. Lazy Boy said that after the battle between the Piegan and Gros Ventres, which followed shortly after the discovery of Many Horses' body, the Piegan erected a death lodge for Many Horses, and his eldest daughters selected more than 10 of his favorite horses to be killed before the burial lodge. Later Lazy Boy's father, Calf Looking, a band chief in the Piegan camp, took charge of the distribution of Many Horses' herd. Many Horses' eldest daughter instructed him to divide the horses among the three surviving wives, the several daughters, and one son of the deceased chief. After each received a sizable herd, she asked that the rest of the horses be given to the people. Every member of Many Horses' band received a horse and some persons outside the band also got one.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

This orderly distribution of horses following a death intestate was possible only in cases where the deceased was a man of prominence who had been well liked and highly respected by his people during his life. In many instances of death intestate members of the camp, whether or not they were related to the deceased, made a run for his property as soon as they learned of his death through the loud weeping and wailing of his close relatives. Men of the camp ran for his horses, while women went to get his household furnishings. The men might take all the good horses in his herd and leave the poor ones for the widow. Close relatives of the deceased, preoccupied with their mourning, did not attempt to prevent this raid, and custom decreed that they should not do so. The raiders were not permitted to take horses or other property belonging to the dead man's wife or other members of his family before his death, even though horses belonging to those people ran with the dead man's herd. On a woman's death people might raid her horses and other property. Informants recalled that these raids were made with particular relish upon the property of a man of some wealth who had had a reputation for stinginess. As one informant stated, "Even his wife would be glad to be rid of him, and she would remarry shortly after his death."

Wissler (1911, pp. 26–27) claimed these raids were limited to relatives of the deceased. However, our informants' contentions that anyone in the village might share in the raid were based upon personal observations. They are corroborated by the brief description of Culbertson (1851, p. 126), penned a century ago.[48]

SECONDARY ASSOCIATIONS OF THE HORSE IN BLACKFOOT RELIGION

IN BUNDLE TRANSFERS

Wissler (1912 a, pp. 253–254) expressed the opinion that the association of horse payments with the transfer of Blackfoot medicine bun-

[48] Recognition of the legality of a verbal will made before death seems to have been widespread in the Plains. Kiowa informants spoke of this custom in their tribe. Cheyenne also recognized it (Llewellyn and Hoebel, 1941, pp. 214–215). Inheritance customs in cases of death intestate varied widely, with preference given to different relatives by different tribes. Tixier (1940, p. 184) found that the Osage recognized a form of primogeniture by which the eldest son inherited all his father's horses, while the eldest daughter became owner of the lodge. The Plains Cree father's horses were distributed by the eldest son among his brothers and sisters, reserving one horse for the widow (Mandelbaum, 1940, p. 251). The Cheyenne widow's right to her husband's horses was "law" (Llewellyn and Hoebel, 1941, p. 216), while the Gros Ventres' wife inherited nothing from her husband, his property generally being divided among his father, mother, brothers, sisters, and children (Kroeber, 1908, pp. 180–181). Kroeber found no fixed customs of inheritance among the Arapaho. The death of a wealthy man resulted in considerable competition among his relatives, although his brothers and sisters generally acquired much of his property (Kroeber, 1902–7, p. 11). I have the distinct impression from reviewing the literature that inheritance patterns in other Plains Indian tribes may have been no more standardized than they were among the Blackfoot. However, I have found no description in the literature of the raid on property by nonrelatives of the deceased among tribes other than the Blackfoot.

The male relatives were obligated to care for the widow. Women did own property, nevertheless, and might dispose of it according to their own wishes, but should they receive horses from a dying man, a close male relative would be obliged to care for this property.

Under the violent fluctuation of economic fortunes due to enemy raids, uncontrolled livestock disease and severe winters, inheritance was usually not a very significant factor in Blackfoot social life. Though there are notorious cases where young men remained idly in camp because they had inherited sufficient horses to make the warpath unnecessary, such cases stand out by dint of their rarity. Most obligations were settled prior to death, and in mourning dissipation of the property was speedy, relatives and non-relatives alike not unwilling to be present at the distraught hand-outs of the dead man's possessions. Then the immediate kinsmen were left to mourn, stripped of property, themselves careless of what happened. Nevertheless, in distributing the property, the prior obligations to siblings as compared with own children is striking.

Throughout life reciprocal obligations between brothers was stressed. In childhood the older brother was responsible for introducing a younger brother into the boy's life of the camps. Later he took his younger brother on his first war party. As repayment for this instruction, the younger brother would give a sizable fraction of his booty to the older, and this practice would continue indefinitely after the young man had showed his capability of independent fighting. Once established as a warrior, the young man would take a still younger sibling on war parties, in order to instruct him. This practice established a chain of obligations to repay older brothers and instruct younger brothers who in their turn would repay their instructors.

Competition for honors was a potentially disintegrating force in the relations between brothers, but this system of obligations solidified fraternal relations. In this light the prior obligations to brothers over sons is to be understood: A man's son normally received aid not from his father but from his father's younger brother who would ordinarily be the son's "older brother." Thus interaction in certain spheres was greater with members of adjacent age grades than with one's parents. This was particularly true with reference to economic exchange, and these economic obligations continued through life, finally to be expressed in a man's last words on his deathbed. The main exception to this rule was with a favored child, where the father himself chose to assume the rôle normally falling to an older brother. In accordance with such sentimental ties, the favored child usually received the bulk of a man's property, in contrast to the usual emphasis on sibling solidarity which succeeded in channeling property toward siblings.

Residence after marriage also assumed no specific forms. Not only might

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

657 and established camp around the ration house, uneasy days followed for the farming instructor. Ferocious-looking men stalked gloomily outside his house, whip in hand and rifle slung over the shoulder. These were the men he was to lure out of tipis and teach to build houses. There was nothing to do but hand out beef and flour, hope that there would be enough to go around, and pray that this would make them amenable to work.

657 342 A few of the milder men were taken aside and instructed in the art of joining logs so that they could help the others build huts. With axes as the only tool and logs fastened together by raw-hide thongs, a few huts were built along the banks of the river. It was not until a second ration house was built to decentralize the bands, that house-building began in earnest. Some of the conservative ones preferred to remain in tipis, but in general people took quickly to the new huts. In the first place there were no more hides with which to construct tipi covers; the only substitute, canvas, was beyond the means of most to obtain and afforded inadequate protection in winter. Moreover, the mud-chinked cabins with turf roof and fireplace or packed earth were much warmer, despite the objections of some old men. To be sure they were much more difficult to transport, but the need for long journeys was no longer present. If one wanted to change his location a short distance, the logs could still [168] be torn apart and reassembled on a clean site. When someone died in the family and the survivors felt "lonesome" in the old dwelling, the house was readily pulled down and the logs given to relatives. 361 So villages of appearing and disappearing houses were built in the neighbourhood of a chief, very much like the winter camps of the old days in the foothills.

657 241 177 More difficult than the establishment of houses was the attempt to induce these meat-eaters to garden. Little appetite for the strange roots grown by the farm instructor, coupled with a fair subsistence on rations, was not a very satisfactory setting for the introduction of a new technology. In fact, to grovel in the dirt when one was accustomed to riding over it on a fast buffalo horse seemed demeaning. Though the instructors tried to enlist the young men by threats and promises, many were set against it. This was the white man's way of doing things, and they were Indians. The whites had already done enough to disrupt the Indian way of life without insisting that all work like whites. Later, the farm instructors might 657 241 have exerted pressure by threatening to withdraw rations, but at

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

the seven whose incomes we inspected no change of property through this channel occurred.

A funeral brings with it certain distributive features. First, to prevent the bereaved from hurting themselves, many people must be present at all times in the days after the death. They must be generously fed, for generosity is important at all times. Then the grave-diggers are given something for their services. After interment all property is disposed of. The terms of the will are carried out, though they are concerned with only a part of the possessions given away. A house is literally cleaned of everything in any way valuable. People take what they wish, and the personal property of the deceased may be burned, especially at the death of a wife or husband. If a woman dies, the farm implements are kept for the widower by some close relative to prevent their being given away. If a man dies, his farm implements are either willed to a relative or, in case of no will, are given away to a kinsman. When everything is gone, the nearest relatives are expected to care for the bereaved and at the suitable interval of time give them new clothing, blankets, and food with which to start life over again.

Only one of the seven whose expenditures we investigated[1] was influenced by death; the deceased was his father's sister. Our informant took care of the old lady before her death, and others helped to buy groceries. No mention was made of property being received at death, and it is probable that she had little or none to dispose of. Only occasionally is death important as a means of distribution.

Outside the family an important system of distribution is gambling. This takes four main forms: hand game, pool or "snooky," poker, and horse racing. The hand games occur most frequently, particularly where many families congregate, as at the hay camps or the mine village. It is difficult to estimate how much changes hands through the course of an evening; we have heard of individuals winning $30 in an all-night session. More often the gain or loss is $2 to $5.

Pool or "snooky," played by young men in the village pool hall, draws bets of 10 to 50 cents from the participants. Spectators may also enter the game via side bets, or novices may be lured into betting high stakes by a display of ineptness on the part of an expert who later will play in his true form to snare the sucker.

[1] Cf. Appendix B.

[See category 434, pp. 191-194--Analyst]

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

remain the honoured and respected heads of extended families whose lives are not chaotic. The residuals of a broken household rejoin their more stable relatives, while the new household, if not already provided with a residence, joins another group of relatives.

Death furnishes a final point where social disorganization may occur. It is faced today by some with terror, by others with equanimity. This seems to depend upon whether the dying person is mainly Christian or Blackfoot in outlook. Christians, uncertain of the future and concerned with the process of moral retribution, contrast with the Blackfoot who have no idea of atonement, for the mythical Sand Hills are considered a haven where good and bad alike are welcomed by their deceased kinsmen.

As death approaches, relatives gather around the dying person to bid him farewell. The immediate kin usually remain until the end, while others come and go. All are expected to help defray the cost of a funeral. Sometimes in the last hours a priest will be summoned to baptize a person of Indian faith, just as a kind of insurance.

After the last breath the formalities of mourning begin. In former times the nearest kin would don old clothes, cut their hair, and gash themselves with a knife. Old clothes and dishevelled appearance still obtain, and a mourner is vigilantly guarded by kinsmen to prevent serious self-injury. In the meanwhile others are dispatched to get the coffin, arrange for the burial service, and dig the grave. The corpse is attired in best raiment.

Funerals follow a simplified white pattern suffused with Indian custom. Rather than leave the coffin in the open or under a tipi, burial has been adopted to forestall grave robbers. There are no white prayers at the grave, but as the coffin is lowered, an intense wailing begins by all spectators. Kinsmen who heap the earth on top of the coffin receive special gifts. Once, a few years ago, however, a man received special supernatural powers in a dream to handle corpses and bury them, and he took no payment for his services.

The subsequent mourning follows the Blackfoot pattern. If the deceased is a key member of a household, especially a spouse, all unwilled possessions to the last packet of cigarettes are given away because the sight of these articles could only increase the pain of separation by reminding one constantly of the deceased. If a sibling, a child, or aged person dies, the mourning is not so intense, and the useful household effects remain in the hands of the mourners. In any case some kind of give-away with many people present is

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

765 prescribed in order to help the survivors forget. The mourners do not
768 participate in the activity but say, "It makes us feel good to give these things away. It is the last time that we lose things on him
765 [the deceased]." At the conclusion of this give-away, a period of mourning follows, varying from four days for an infant or distant relative to four years for a cherished spouse. During this time the mourner may wail alone on the hills or sit vacantly in the house of a watchful kinsman who encourages him to forget his loneliness and to "live for his children." Throughout prolonged mournings the intensity gradually diminishes, although all say that intense moments of grief occur until the last anniversary of mourning when suddenly life becomes again tolerable. Above all, the bereaved absents himself from associations that remind him of the dead person. In one typical instance the parents, after the death of a child, remained four months away from their house, camping in a tent, in order to avoid this association. Only after the four months could they return and take up living there again. For this reason, years after a death many feel hesitant to enter the hospital. However long mourning may be, at its completion relatives must assist the mourner to start life again by giving new clothing and equipment for the household.

596 In theory, when the key person in an extended family dies, the
768 next eldest kinsman assumes leadership. In practice, allegiance to the successor may not be sufficient to maintain the solidarity of the group. We have seen how in the old days after the death of a band chief, many of the followers moved to other bands. Today with even less coherence complete redistribution of households is apt to follow. However, a successor with wealth and generosity has certain factors working in favour of continuation of the extended family. Though household furnishings and sacred bundles may be scattered, wills help maintain intact essential farm tools and live-stock, house, and barns. Thus when Hind Bull died, his son-in-law had already stepped into the leading role. Sufficient property remained together after the death of Three Suns that an energetic kinsman could carry on. There is Blackfoot precedent for this, and the agency has discouraged abandonment and destruction of all property in a household. Indeed, relatives have been known to hide the farm equipment of a mourner to prevent his giving it away "until he has sobered up from the mourning." This would certainly have been impossible before 1900.

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

The extended families that quickly dissipate are those with insufficient wealth to support many individuals and no central figure to carry the burden of leadership. Those loyal to the deceased will have other loyalties which compete with the successor. Successors with more of a flare for enjoying themselves than for maintaining the family assets lose their legacies and become dependents upon the more sagacious. Moreover, without a strong successor, quarrels over the legacy arise. In view of the multitudinous relatives recognized in Blackfoot society, particularly after several marriages, claimants for the property may be numerous. One recently contested estate consisting of horses and cattle was left intestate, though the deceased had given away the body of his horses before death. The claimants for the cattle were: (1) a classificatory older brother of the deceased, actually the dead man's mother's brother; (2) a classificatory young brother, actually the dead man's father's sister's son; (3) an adopted daughter; (4) a nephew, the exact relationship being unknown. As the nephew had already received the horses, this gift was confirmed by the council of chiefs, and the cattle were awarded to the adopted daughter; the other claims were unrecognized.

Today, households that are economically successful tend to become independent. Many Stars predicted at treaty time, "You will all be chiefs." As each household with a plough, harrow, and binder no longer needs the economic assistance of a chief, the main relationship to the leader is sentimental. The leader of a stable, extended family draws his followers from those without means, the young who have not yet obtained the tools of production, and the aged who need shelter and companionship. White law and administration have further weakened the system by the assumption that the conjugal biological family is the social unit to be preserved. For example, the levirate, which entrusted a younger brother with the care of his older brother's widow, is unrecognized in English law; today the widow must rejoin her own relatives pending remarriage and usually goes to the home of the one who is best able to support her, preferably her older brother. Furthermore, the head of an extended family has no officially recognized place in the political system. Few leaders of extended families are members of the council of chiefs, because, as we have shown, it is a frustrating position. Unofficially the head of an extended family may carry as much or more weight among Indians than many elected chiefs. A member

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

since our grandfather lived to be ninety-seven. 000

My grandmothers have always been close to their grandchildren even to this day. It is common for the grandparents 603
to keep one of their grandchildren and raise it. One of our sons is living with my parents in this way. He and my father were both born on the same day, January 9, and they both have the same first name, Edward. Traditional closeness between elders and grandchildren gave kids an exposure to the same values their parents were raised by. It also gave kids a 603
lot of attention, which many modern children seem to be 855
sadly lacking. If the mother and father of a crying child were busy, there was usually a grandmother or grandfather nearby who would find out what was wrong. As a result, it is not our [861]
custom to spank children, although it was occasionally done. This extra attention helps to explain how parents handled half a dozen or more small children inside their crowded tipis on long cold winter days and nights. The elders told stories, played games, and otherwise helped to occupy the minds of the children.

When I was young I used to take my little brother to the 604
home of my father's uncle, because his wife would tell us old-time stories. She was a real good storyteller, and we didn't mind walking several miles across the prairie to visit her as well as our cousins there. She would keep us entertained for hours. I can just imagine how it would have been if we had still been living in our old-time tipi camps, with aunts and uncles and grandparents all within short walking distance.

Old widows who were alone in the past were often given 768
an orphaned child by some relative. Any small child that lost 589
its mother was taken over by a relative, usually the grandmother. My grandmother's first husband, Joe Beebe, was 768
raised in this way. His mother died during childbirth, so her 603
mother raised him. This old lady would take him around to [853]

768 different nursing mothers so he could get some milk. She
603 would feed him broths at other times and let him suckle on her
853 own, dry breasts when he got too fussy.

853 My grandfather suckled on his grandmother's breasts so long that milk started coming out of them. This is true, because a number of relatives have told me that all the elders used to talk about it. She was very proud of herself, and showed off her nursing abilities whenever she could.

Generally children were fed nothing but mother's milk for the first three or four months. Their first food was usually a little broth, and they were given bones to suck on. I've heard of kids that were nursed till they were past six years of age. It wasn't unusual for a playing child to run indoors suddenly [842] and ask to nurse from its mother. Some mothers liked to nurse their kids long as a form of birth control. But I hear this didn't always work.

854 Babies were kept bundled up most of the time. They were dressed on the upper part of the body while the lower part was packed with soft, dry moss. Then they were wrapped with soft cloth or hide and put inside their moss bag or cradleboard. A moss bag laces all the way up the front so that only the baby's head is exposed. A cradleboard is attached to the back of a moss bag to give it a solid frame, for transporting and to keep the baby better protected. I have used both of these with my kids.

I really like to watch babies when I unlace their moss bags and watch their little arms and legs stretch. They get so used to being in their bags that they often wouldn't sleep unless I laced them up first. This way they are so well padded that I feel very secure in handling them. I have always been told that babies are not strong enough to be held all the time unless they are well wrapped, like this.

Cradleboards were almost essential back in the days when [449] my grandmothers did all their traveling by horseback. The strap on the back of the cradleboard was hooked over the high horn on the traditional-style woman's saddle.

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

The Medicine Tipis in Our Encampment

The camp was still coming together, and although 000
the big event, the transfer of Horns Society
memberships, was still a few days off, there were
now already more lodges in the camp than there
had been on the final day of last year's encamp-
ment.

Sitting out in front of our Yellow-Otter Tipi, 532
we were visiting with Grandma under the large 342
umbrella, looking around the camp circle and
talking about our People's tradition of painting [124]
some tipis with symbolic designs.

In the long-ago, tipis with painted designs
could be found in the camps of most tipi-dwelling
people. Such tipis were very personal, expressing [787]
the dreams of their owners, and were usually de-
stroyed when the owner died. Among some tribes, [768]
painted tipis housed their chief or sacred Bun-
dles, but as these declined, so did designed tipis.
Although some tribes have painted their tipis in
recent years, these designs usually have no mean-
ing and often bear little resemblance to their tra-
ditional counterparts.

Our painted tipis, however, follow a basic
style of ancient design, and are easy to recognize
and distinguish from the tipis of other tribes.
Originally each tipi's painting told a story and [778]
accompanied a small sacred Bundle, and while in
most cases the stories have been forgotten and the [178]

[p. 67-A]

taken north and now it is a white man's Pipe. But my old Pipe, it has a lot of Spirits; I'm sure that it hears me talking about it right now.

That Pipe belonged to me two times. The first time it was transferred to me. The second time, it was returned to me after the death of the person I transferred it to. We went to his mother [old Mrs. Day Rider] to pay our respects. She is a relative of ours. Mrs. Day Rider came over and kissed me, and she was crying. She said, "Oki, Big Snake, go get your Pipe. You don't have to pay on it, just get painted for it again." I didn't say anything. I just looked at her. My brothers, Jack and Jim Low Horn, they told me, "Why aren't you talking? It's your Pipe. Take it. It won't be good for it to be around a sad place."

After the funeral I went to her house. She was walking outside, crying. She just pointed to the house. I went inside and I hugged my Pipe. I told it that a sad thing happened to it because its Owner died. I took it and started home. That's why I had it a second time.

THE LONG-TIME PIPE

Some of our People think that the Long-Time Pipe was in the Bundle originally given by Thunder. They call the Long-Time Medicine Pipe *Mesam-Achkuineman*. Our People hold that Bundle in special reverence; its Owners are often chiefs.

The earliest-known Owner of the Long-Time Pipe was Grey Broad Head. He was remembered by a much later Owner, Stephen Fox, who died not long ago near the age of one hundred. Stephen Fox was still a young man when he met Grey Broad Head, who was then about one hundred himself. This man attributed his old age to the Power he got while keeping the Long-Time Pipe. He told Stephen Fox that his payments for the Pipe included fifty dogs. That was back when our People relied on dogs for help in moving camp and packing meat.

[p. 147-A]

would be brought to trial before the Owner and his society. He said that I would have to pay a lot more on the Pipe because I had stolen it. 778 425

Some time passed and I heard people say that Long Mane's Pipe was stolen. They didn't know yet who it was. Then Bob Black Plume came to my house, and he told me, "They have found out you stole that Pipe."

Then Long Mane sent word for me to go to his house. When I got there, he said, "You stole my Pipe. In the spring we will have your trial. You set the date when you will be prepared for the trial." I said, "I am ready to take it any time. I have all my payments ready." Then he asked me, "How do you stand? How much do you intend to give me so that I will let you out of the trial?" My brother had given me five ten-dollar bills. I gave them to Long Mane and he said, "That will do for a start." Then he measured my feet and my wife's for the moccasins they would make for us. He said, "Just say when, so I can tell my comrades, the Crazy Dogs, because it's their Pipe too." [They had helped with the payments during his transfer.] 778 432 [575]

As soon as the days were nice, I sent word to him to come up and transfer the Pipe to me. When the day came he set up his tipi by my house. I had my Pipe transferred to me at my home. That's the right way if the transfer is not during the Sun Dance. All the Crazy Dogs came. Laurie Plume led the transfer ceremony. I paid really good on the Pipe. All my relatives came and helped me.

So that is how I stole my Pipe. I'm the only one still living who stole a holy Pipe; just me, Willie Eagle Plume.

STEVE OKA'S PIPE

While mourning over the loss of his wife, Steve Oka found no comfort in the Medicine Pipe their friend Mike Eagle Speaker had given the couple as a present a long time before. No one from the reserve made any effort to claim the Pipe. (Sacred Bundles are usually cared for by someone else 778 [768] [425]

[p. 163-B]

when there is a death in the Owner's family. Often a former Owner takes the Bundle back and later has it transferred to himself.) So Steve Oka sold the Bundle to Hugh Dempsey for three hundred dollars. Dempsey took it for the Blackfoot collection in the then-new Glenbow Museum in Calgary. 778 [768] [425] [439] [432] [435]

The Bundle's former Owner, Mike Eagle Speaker, was one of the first from the Blood Reserve to obtain a college degree. He once told me that he originally got the Bundle because of a vow made during a time of need in his family. Because the Power of the Bundle helped his family overcome their trial, Mike felt he had been repaid for his material investment, and for that reason had given the Pipe to its next Owner, accepting no payments. [873] [782] [425]

Mokakin said that this Pipe originally came from the North Blackfoot People. The first Blood man to own it was Sun Calf, a partner of old Red Crow. After him the Owners were Hungry Crow; Rides-at-the-Door (the holy woman and her late husband); Gordon Bird; Morning Bird; Camoose Bottle; Joe Eagle Ribs; Mike Eagle Speaker; and then Steve Oka. 778 793

WILLIE MILLS'S PIPE

One of our former Medicine Pipe Bundles is listed in the collection of the Provincial Museum as the "Willie Mills Pipe." Mills was the grandson of the Negro interpreter, Dave Mills (Young Scabby Bull). Like Steve Oka, Mills sold his Pipe while mourning the loss of his wife. He sold it in 1966 to the white man of the Alberta Provincial Museum. 778 439 177 [144] [768]

Mokakin and Atsitsina, both of whom had sacred Pipes at that time, told me that they used to dread this white man's visits. Mokakin said, "That guy, he never takes no for an answer. He come back and he come back, no matter what I tell him, he always come in with his big smile. Even nobody trusts him with it. He smile, and

was hard for me to go back to my brother-in-law and tell him that he couldn't take the ancient Pipe because that white man was going to take it to Edmonton." He added, "It was just as hard for me when John Red Crane asked me to drum for him at the transfer. I didn't believe in it at all, but by the rules of our Old Ways, I couldn't refuse. He was my relative and I knew the songs. I lost my son not long after that. Just about everyone who was at that transfer suffered some misfortune soon afterwards, especially John." 778 432 829 [439] [796] [533] [784]

Mark's father-in-law was old Long-Time Squirrel. He died while he was still Owner of the Different-People Pipe. At that time his son was not prepared to take the Pipe, so Mark's mother-in-law asked him if he would take it, since it could not stay in the home where a member of the family had died. So Mark and his wife took it to their home, and had it transferred to them during the following Sun Dance. 778 425 [768]

Mark is the Weather Dancer as the result of a relative's dream. A woman named Prairie Chicken Calling was visited by a holy man while she was sleeping. The holy man pointed into the distance and asked, "Do you recognize that man over there?" The man was Mark, dressed as a Weather Dancer. The holy man said, "I am telling you that if that man becomes the Weather Dancer and devotes himself to his duties, he will have a long life." 535 793 787

The woman told Mark about her dream. She said, "Please pity me, relative, and do as my dream instructed." Mark spoke to the Old Man, who was then the Weather Dancer. The Old Man agreed to transfer his rights during the next Sun Dance. Mark has been Weather Dancer at three Sun Dance ceremonies so far. He said, "That's the most Powerful thing that I have, now. It's my life, and I will live by it so that I can reach old age." [425] [424] [886]

[p. 336-B]

the official first name of Iniskim. Sometime later our old uncle said: "This boy has a legal name, but he has not yet been given a name in the Old Way. Myself, I am no longer using my young-man-name. Since you two are carrying the names of my father and mother, I give this little boy my own name. He will grow old like me, known as Atsitsina." 793 553

Each of our children will be able to call on the Old Man's Spirits with Iniskims—his were passed on to us, still sitting up in his old altar, where he put them. The rest of his holy things were placed in the grave with him. An old metal suitcase held his doctoring articles. A cloth bag contained his old, rawhide-covered drum. On top of the suitcase lay his two painted and carved canes. Thus his body went on its final journey. 793 [768] [764]

The Old Man's passing caused someone to look up his official birthdate on the records. It turned out that he was older than he had thought —his birth was recorded for the year 1877. He was the oldest man among all the Blackfoot People when he died. The next oldest was Guy Wolf Child, who passed away not long after. 793 165

A few months before the Old Man's passing, we had lost another one of our ceremonial leaders —old John Many Chiefs, or White Horns. His death came about the same time as that of Mrs. Mountain Horse, the lady who prepared medicinal herbs. Shortly after that came the death of White Horns' eldest son—Ray Many Chiefs, who 165

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 362-B]

22: Wissler & Duvall E,I-5 (1902-1907) 1908
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

upon him, and held him fast. Now, Stuck-Behind had been raised by the beaver, and for that reason was very hard to hold. Smart-Crow said to him, "Lick my hand, and you will know that I am your father." He did so, and recognized his father.

When the boys were at home with their father, their names were changed. Ashes-Chief was now called Rock, and Stuck-Behind was called Beaver. Rock was the evil (?) one, and Beaver the good one, as the Crow had told their father in the dream. One day Rock said to his father, "Make me a bow and two arrows." "What do you want with bows and arrows?" said Smart-Crow. "Well," said Rock, "Beaver and I wish to go out to hunt buffalo. While we are gone, you must go back to our old lodge where the bones of our mother lie, and cut a stick such as she used for stirring the meat when cooking. Wait there for us until we bring the meat." Then Rock and Beaver went on their way to hunt.

Now, at this time, the people cooked in pots of clay. These were shaped out of mud by the hands, and put in the sun to dry; then the kettle was rubbed all over with fat inside and out, and placed in the fire. When it was red hot, it was taken out, and allowed to cool. Such a pot was good for boiling. Rock told his father to take one of his mother's pots, fill it with water, and put it over the fire so that it might be ready for his mother to boil meat.

After a while the boys came up to their mother's lodge, where her skeleton lay.[1] They had a great deal of meat with them. Rock said, "Now, I shall take a little meat from each part of the buffalo, boil it in the pot, and then make medicine to put over the skeleton of our mother." Beaver said, "I shall help mother with the heart, the brains, and the marrow." Rock took up the tongue, blew his breath on it four times, and put in into the pot. Then he took up the other parts, one at a time, and did the same. The brains and marrow, however, he laid to one side, and did not put them into the pot. Rock said to Beaver, "I will help mother in two things and you may help her in the other two things." Now Smart-Crow was lying down in bed. The boys took his robe, and covered their mother's bones. Then the pot began to boil more than ever, and Rock said to his father, "Get up, call mother, and tell her that her pot is about to boil over."

The father arose from his bed, went over to the place where the robe lay, and said, "Get up, woman! Your pot is about to boil over." The bones did not move. Then Beaver called, "Mother, get up quick! Your pot is boiling over." At this there was a little movement under the robe. Then Rock called out, "Mother, get up quick, and feed us!" At this there was

[1] In former times the dead were often left in the lodge, while the whole camp moved to another site.

if necessary someone is sure to look after them. 597

Boarding schools have introduced a new factor into this question of age. If separation or death of its parents occurs once the child is in school the need for a home is not so pressing, and the boy or girl can usually be accommodated with relatives for the holidays without phrasing it as an adoption. It is also possible to remain in the care of the school throughout the year. 155 597 586 168

Children in the great majority of cases go to relatives for adoption, although the relationship may be remote. These are often relatives acquired through adoption the previous generation. The families to which these children go are almost equally divided between the relatives of the mother and the father. There are instances, too, where no relatives are involved. In these cases the stated reasons for adopting were that they wanted children, or were sorry for some child and feared that it would not be well treated under some new conditions, such as the remarriage of the father or mother. 597

It is said that girls and boys are equally desirable, likewise the children of either strangers or relatives. Although the great majority of children taken are boys, this does not seem to me significant, for one does not hear of girl babies being passed over. It is natural that most of the children should be taken by relatives since they would be the first to hear of the need for adoption. In many cases the families would be living close together, and it would mean very little adjustment for the child to settle in a new home. In one instance a baby and its father were living with the latter's father's sister and her husband, and when the father married again he just left the child with his aunt who adopted it. 587

Similarly, from the point of view of the foster family there is likely to be little disturbance of the household. There is constant visiting of both children and adults, and when a more permanent relationship is assumed it does not disrupt the existing conditions. 597 182 574

In the majority of cases when a child is introduced into a foster home there are no young children living there at the time. There may never have been any in that household or they may all have grown up and left. In the few instances where young children were still there, there seems to have been little disturbance. In one case a younger girl was adopted after a boy had been taken, and it was remarked that no conflict arose between them since they had previously been playmates, living near one another. I am inclined 597 593

42: Kehoe A,G-4,5 (1953, 1956) 1960
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

The informants were questioned as to the size of the tipis when their ancestors used the tipi rings. They all agreed on the fact that the tipis were not large before their people acquired the horse. Several of them said that they heard of large tipis or tipi rings with two fireplaces during "horse days"; this tipi had to be taken apart when moving. George Bull Child, the interpreter, had interesting information on the size of the precontact lodge:

> The tipis were not very large before my people got the horse. The dogs were bigger then, but they could not carry very much even though the travois made a load lighter. A certain dog would have to carry a tipi skin alone. The lodge poles would be smaller in those days, so that a dog could pull them. A big cover would be only ten skins then. Some fellows would say, "My tipi is six skins." A big chief would have ten skins. Later on, when they got the horse, eighteen to twenty skins was average. [10]

Adam White Man said that small tipi rings occurring in a camp of larger rings may have resulted from the smaller dwellings of widows, elderly people, and from children's play tipis.[11]

All the informants were asked whether or not their people ever returned to the same campground and occupied the same tipi ring. Several of them thought that it was not the usual practice for their people to return to the same ring. Bull Head agreed with this but added, "It was not the usual practice for people to come back to the same ring, but my father did return to the one I am protecting. There is no reason to believe that my father considered he owned the tipi ring that he returned to." Information contrary to this was given by Annie Calf Looking:

> Yes, my grandmother said that her people, the Don't Laugh band, would leave their rock ring and mark it.[12] No, she did not tell me where they camped but she did tell me that they marked their camp. They marked their own stone ring and they could not take another person's ring. If you wanted someone's ring, you would have to pay dearly for the spot.[13] You would have to give robes, dogs or horses if you came and wanted to take someone's ring away. There was quite a dispute when someone came and took another person's camping ground. Each person would know right where their ring was located. When a person died, their brother could take the ring, give it to someone else, or leave it blank. People kept from taking a person's ring because they were afraid of the dead.

---

[10] In his letter of March 25, 1954, Ewers believes "the estimate given by this informant on the average size of the Blackfoot lodges in postborse period to be excessive. My informants (independently) seemed to agree very well with Wissler that the average sized tipi was twelve to fourteen skins." (Italics mine.)

[11] A photograph confirming Adam White Man's statement was published by McClintock (1936, p. 10), in which two children are shown playing in a small tipi, the sides of which are held down by rocks. A modern example of this play tipi was photographed by the writer at the 1956 Blackfoot encampment (pls. 55, c; 56, b; 61, a).

[12] Cecile Black Boy claimed that the tipi ring was marked by buffalo horn cores left among the rocks of the ring.

[13] Annie Calf Looking may be here confusing ownership of the ring (as a collection of rocks) with ownership of the right to camp in a certain position in the camp circle (see, e. g., Grinnell, 1923, p. 294).

48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

another country, where they will have lack of nothing; and that they have often been heard when they were summoned to smoke a pipe together. At the funeral of rich Indians, several horses are often killed upon the spot; and we were told of instances when twelve or fifteen horses were killed in this manner at the funeral of a celebrated chief . . . The relations assemble at the residence of the deceased, and even the men lament and wail. The corpse is generally buried on the first day, and in case of death during the night, it is removed on the following morning." (Maximilian, pp. 258–259.) He likewise referred briefly to the treatment of the sick: "The medicine men or physicians of the Blackfeet are very unskilful. We always saw them take water in their mouths, which they spit out over the wounded . . . Drums and rattles (schischikue) were daily used in their attendance on the sick, in the closed tent . . . These Indians have some efficacious remedies derived from the vegetable kingdom, one of which is a whitish root from the Rocky Mountains, which is called, by the Canadians, rhubarb, which is said to resemble our rhubarb in its effect and taste, and likewise to act as an emetic. Another root is esteemed to be a powerful remedy against the bite of serpents. In all cases they have recourse to the drum and the rattle, and have great confidence in the intolerable noise caused by those instruments. The Blackfeet make their rattles of leather, wood, or bladder." (Op. cit., p. 258.)

The burial and mourning customs of the Blackfeet were interestingly described by another observer a few years later: "The Blackfeet do not place their dead on scaffolds but either in a hole well covered to keep off the wolves, or they leave them in the lodge with everything just as it is when they die. In that case the wolves of course eat their bodies very soon; and I am told that in this way the body of nearly every Blackfoot is disposed of. When one of them is in mourning he puts white earth on his head and goes out before his lodge wailing most piteously; as soon as the neighbors see that they all rush to his lodge and take it and everything it contains, leaving him nothing but his horse. The death of a relation is therefore a very serious affair, since a man loses all his property as well as his friend." (Culbertson, p. 126.)

The two preceding accounts contain rather conflicting statements, but they may refer to different groups of the Blackfoot confederacy. Possibly the tribal customs have undergone a change within a comparatively short time. This would be suggested by the following quotation: "Their manner of burial has always been (until recently) to inclose the dead body in robes or blankets, the best owned by the departed, closely sewed up, and then, if a male or chief, fasten in the branches of a tree so high as to be beyond the reach of wolves, and then left to slowly waste in the dry winds. If the body was

48: Bushnell A-4 (no date) 1927 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

184 114 764 [765] [304] that of a squaw or child, it was thrown into the underbrush or jungle, where it soon became the prey of the wild animals. The weapons, pipes, &c., of men were inclosed, and the small toys of children with them. The ceremonies were equally barbarous, the relatives cutting off, according to the depth of their grief, one or more joints of the fingers, divesting themselves of clothing even in the coldest weather, and filling the air with their lamentations. All the sewing up and burial process was conducted by the squaws, as the men would not touch nor remain in proximity to a dead body." (Yarrow, p. 161.) The preceding notes were prepared by John Young at the Blackfoot Agency, and tell of conditions as they existed some 50 years ago, but it is doubtful if he was acquainted with local customs of the more distant villages, where the older methods of disposing of the dead may still have been practiced.

764 [765] [775] 768 765 [304] Another and what is intended to be a general account of the burial customs of these tribes written only a few years later is very interesting as it contains references to certain customs not mentioned by other writers. It begins: "Their funeral and burial ceremonies indicate their belief in the immortality of the soul. These forms are of a similar type among all the tribes composing the nation. They place their dead, dressed in gaudiest apparel, within a tent, in a sitting posture, or occasionally fold them in skins and lay them on high scaffolds out of the reach of wild beasts, under which the relatives weep and wail. The arms and horses are buried with them, to be used in the long journey to the spirit land, showing the possession of the idea of the dual nature of matter and spirit." (Robinson, pp. 193–194.) And the same writer continues and relates a curious custom following the death of a child: "Immediately upon its decease, the whole village rush into the lodge and take possession of whatever portable property they can seize upon, until the grief-stricken parents are stripped of all their worldly possessions, not even excepting their clothing. The only method of evading the custom is to secrete the most valuable property beforehand, generally a matter difficult of accomplishment." (Op. cit., p. 194.) Evidently the death of a child caused much sorrow among the people, and as told by one who was well acquainted with the ways of life of Blackfeet: "Late one afternoon as I was pursuing my way through the outskirts of the camp, I heard a low sad wail, and on looking up, saw a poor woman meanly clad, the beautiful garments of yesterday having been taken from her. Her legs from the knees to the feet had been gashed with a knife and the blood was clotted upon them. Her hair had been cut off, and one of the fingers on the left hand had been severed at the first joint. A piece of wood lay in the palm of the injured hand, the clotted blood was mingled with ashes, which had been sprinkled over